The Heart of Jewish Meditation:
Abraham Abulafia's Path of the Divine Names



translated by

Avi Solomon

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For Uriel

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"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord put His spirit upon them!"
Moses, Numbers 11:29

"The method of pronouncing the Name is found in the book Light of the Intellect by Abraham Abulafia, and this method is the secret of Sefer Yetsira"
Moshe Cordovero, Or Yakar on Zohar, Song of Songs

"I began to fathom the gist of Abulafia's books and even attempted to perform a few of his instructions to the letter and experienced that they caused changes in my states of consciousness"
Gershom Scholem, From Berlin to Jerusalem

Translator's Preface

Amidst the rich panoply of Jewish Kabbalah, Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291) resonates the most with modern, philosophically minded seekers of direct mystical experience. Abulafia creatively combined Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* and the ancient *Sefer Yesira* into an integrated method of concentrating on the Divine Name that opens the path to fulfilling the soul's deepest spiritual longings. Intense practice of Abulafia's meditative techniques propels the attentive soul into a state of awakened receptivity where the active divine influence can reach down to meet and illuminate the human intellect.

Abulafia was unique amongst Jewish mystics in providing precise instructions for personal spiritual practice. I have translated meditations from three of Abulafia's major mystical handbooks "*that reveal the true knowledge of the Divine Name*" as he puts it. These particular texts achieved a wide underground circulation amongst Jewish mystic elites despite a severe rabbinical ban on Abulafia promulgated by Shlomo ben Adret.

Abulafia's *Life of the World to Come* (extant in more manuscript copies that the *Zohar*!) is quoted verbatim in Yehuda Albotini's *Sulam HaAliya*.

Abulafia's *Book of Desire* is quoted in the fourth, censored part of Chaim Vital's *Shaarei Kedusha*.

Selections from Abulafia's *Light of the Intellect* were printed in Moshe Cordovero's *Pardes Rimonim*.

Abulafia's meditations have intrinsic moral prerequisites that guard against their misuse. These techniques can provide short, liminal leaps into revelatory states of consciousness and the adept needs a kind of measured boldness to attempt this. Abulafia repeatedly emphasizes returning back and integrating these threshold experiences into one's daily life.

Abulafia was an eclectic thinker who absorbed and adapted Sufi and even Yogic influences into his mystical toolkit. While the affinities between Abulafia's methods and the ancient *Hekhalot* (Heavenly Palace) rituals are obvious, they also have interesting structural similarities to Graeco-Coptic magical invocations like those found in *P*GM XIII 646-1077.

Translating Abulafia is an impossible task. I hope these gleanings will prompt deeper study of Abulafia's oeuvre that can provide a rich breviary of numerically equivalent concepts and rigorous linguistic interpretations to ponder and apply in one's spiritual path.

Avi Solomon

Abraham Abulafia *Life of the World to Come* (1280)

"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"
(Amos 4:12)

Prepare yourself, unify your heart and purify your body and choose yourself a special place that will not let your voice be heard by any man in the world.

Be one and special and isolate yourself without any other, and sit in the room or in the attic and do not reveal your secret to any man.

And if you can do this in a house that is a little darkened, do it.

And it is best and fitting that you do this at night.

At the same hour that you prepare yourself to speak with your creator, be careful to empty your thoughts from all the vanities of this world and request Him to proclaim his courageous victories to you.

And adorn yourself in a prayer shawl (*Tallit*) and put phylacteries (*Tefillin*) upon your head and arms if you can, so that you will be in awe and fear of the *Shekhinah* (the female aspect of God) who is present with you at that moment.

And clean yourself and your clothes, and if you can, let them all be white clothes, as all this benefits the intention of Awe and Love very much.

And if this is at night, light many candles until they make your eyes shine very beautifully. And after this take ink, pen and tablet in your hands.

And this will be a witness that you come to work the work of God your Lord in happiness and an innocent heart.

And begin to combine letters, a few with many, and turn and revolve them speedily until your heart is warmed by their revolutions. And put your heart in their movement and what their revolution engenders.

And when you feel in yourself that your heart has been warmed very much by the combinations and you understand from them new matters that you did not grasp from human transmission and did not know them from yourself by intellectual effort, then you are ready to receive the abundance (*Shefa*).

And the abundance flows onto you and arouses you to many things one after the other. Prepare your true thought to depict the Name, may his Name be blessed, and his superior angels; depict them in your heart as if they were people, standing or sitting around you and you amongst them like an emissary that the King and his servants want to deploy and he is ready to hear from one of them the pronouncement of the matter of his mission, if from the King or from one of his servants.

And after you have depicted all of this prepare your mind and heart to understand in your thought the many things that will come to you from within the letters computed in your heart, and study all of them or their parts like a person who is told a parable, a riddle or a dream, or as one perusing a topic in a book of wisdom deeper than he can comprehend.

And solve the matter that you will hear to the best solution and as close as you can get to it.

And judge yourself according to what you will understand from it, and do the same with the other matters in all that they will tell you.

And this will all accrue to you after you throw the tablet and stylus from between your fingers or if they fall by themselves due to the plenitude of your thoughts and the multiplicity of your happiness.

And know that as much as the honorable intellectual abundance will be strong with you, so much so will your external and internal organs weaken, and your whole body will be engulfed in a very strong upheaval.

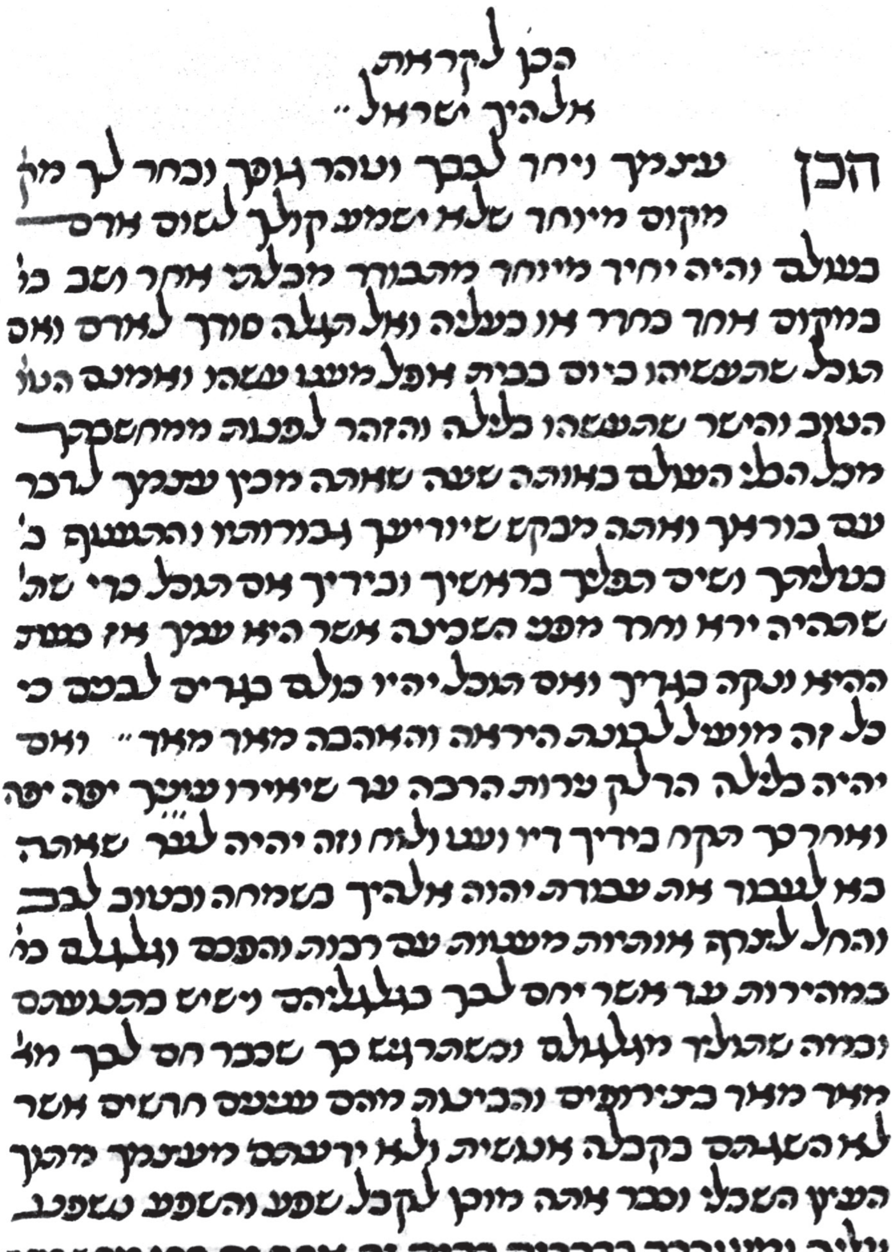
Till you will think for yourself that in any case you will die at that time, for your soul will separate from your body due to the multitude of joy in its comprehension and knowing what you have known. Till you will choose death over life in your understanding for that death occurs only to the body (*Deuteronomy* 30:19).

And in this cause the soul will live a resurrection forever and ever. And then you will know that you have arrived at the degree of receiving the abundance.

And if you wish then to honor the honorable and awesome Name and worship Him truly in the life of the soul and the body, hide your face more and be afraid of looking at God and *"do not come closer, remove your sandals from your feet for the place that you stand upon is holy ground"* (*Exodus* 3:5).

And return to the matters of the body, and rise from there and eat a little and drink a little and smell a pleasing fragrance and return your spirit to its scabbard until the next time. And make your heart happy with your share.

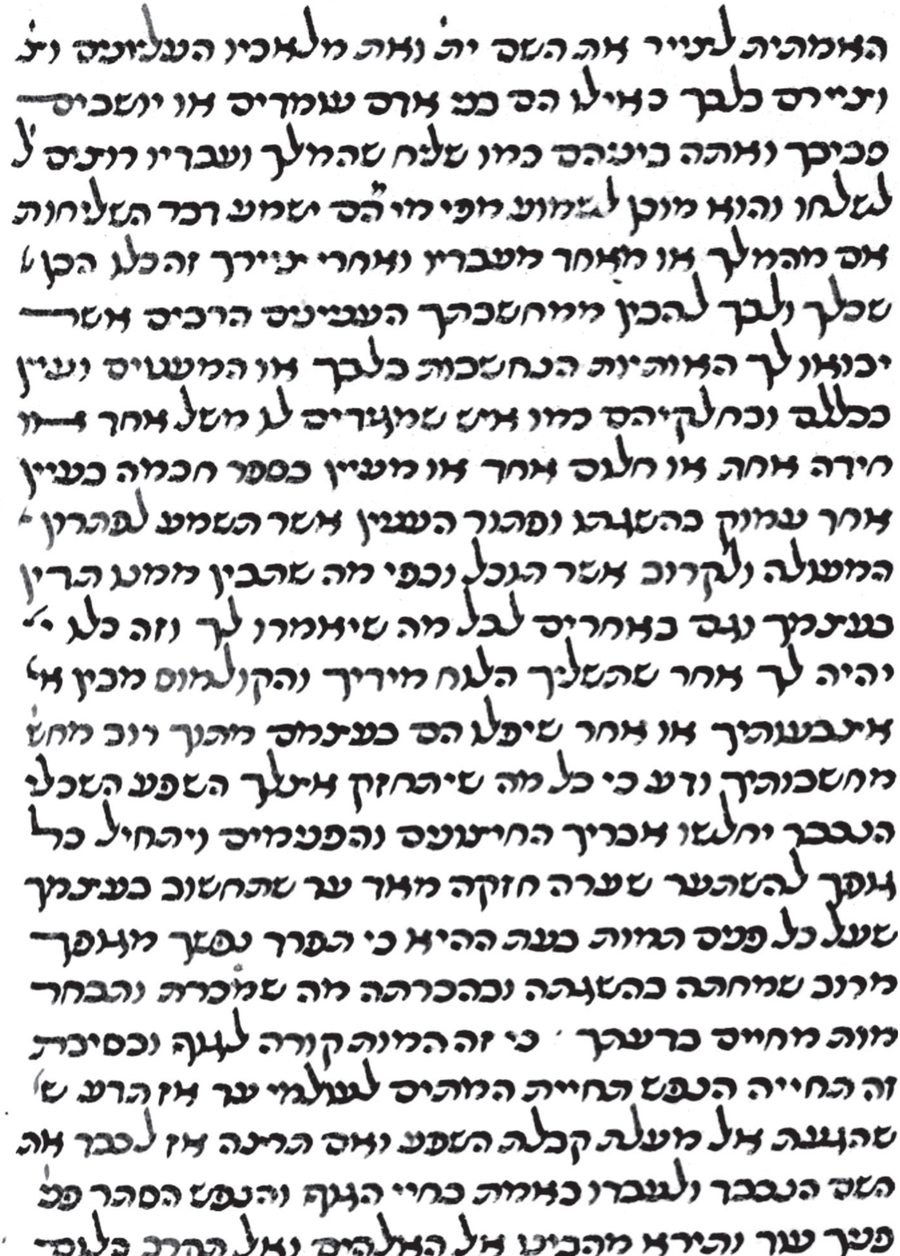
And know that the Lord your God loves you and is the One who teaches man to benefit him, and teaches you knowledge (*Isaiah* 48:17).



הכן לקראת
אלהיך ישראל

הכן עצמך ייחד לבבך וטהר גופך ובחר לך מקום מיוחד שלא ישמע קולך לשום אדם
בעולם והיה יחיד מיוחד מתבודד מבלתי אחר ושב כו'
במקום אחד בחדר או בעליה ואל תגלה סודך לאדם ואם
תוכל שתעשיהו ביום בבית אפי' מעט עשהו ואמנם הטו'
הטוב והישר שתעשהו בלילה והזהר לפנות מחשבתך
מכל הבלי העולם בעוד שאתה מכין עצמך לדבר
עם בוראך ואתה מבקש שיודיעך גבורותיו והתעטף כו'
בטליתך ושים תפלין בראשיך ובידיך אם תוכל כדי שת'
שתהיה ירא וחרד מפני השכינה אשר היא עמך אז בעת
ההיא ונקה בגדיך ואם תוכל יהיו כולם לבנים לבבך כי
כל זה מועיל לכונת היראה והאהבה מאד מאד ואם
יהיה בלילה הדלק נרות הרבה עד שיאירו עיניך יפה יפה
ואחר כך תקח בידיך דיו ועט ולוח וזה יהיה לעד שאתה
בא לעבוד את עבודת יהוה אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב
והחל לצרף אותיות מעטות עם רבות והפכם וגלגלם כו'
במהירות עד אשר יחם לבבך בגלגוליהם ושים כונתם
ובמה שתוליד מגלגולם וכשתרגיש בך שכבר חם לבבך מא'
מאד מאד בצירופים והבינות מהם ענינים חדשים אשר
לא השגתם בקבלה אנושית ולא ידעתם מעצמך מהגיון
השכלי וכבר אתה מוכן לקבל שפע והשפע נשפע
עליך ומעוררך דברים רבים זה אחר זה הכן מחשבתך

Instructions for meditation from Abraham Abulafia's Life of the World to Come *(1)*


הדמיונית לצייר את השם ית' ואת מלאכיו העליונים וה'
ויציירם בלבך כאילו הם בני אדם עומדים או יושבים
סביבך ואתה ביניהם כמו שליח שהמלך ועבדיו רוצים ל'
לשלחו והוא מוכן לשמוע מפי מי מהם ישמע דבר השליחות
אם מהמלך או מאחד מעבדיו ואחרי ציירך זה כלו הכן ע'
שכלך ולבך להבין ממחשבותיך הענינים הרבים אשר
יבואו לך האותיות הנחשבות בלבך או המשנים ועיין
בכללם ובחלקיהם כמו איש שמגידים לו משל אחד או
חידה אחת או חלום אחד או מעיין בספר חכמה בעניין
אחד עמוק כהשגתו ופתור העניין אשר תשמע לפתרון
המעולה ולקרוב אשר יוכל וכפי מה שתבין ממנו הדין
בעיניך וגם באחרים לכל מה שיאמרו לך וזה כלו י'
יהיה לך אחר שתשליך הלוח מידיך והקולמוס מבין א'
אצבעותיך או אחר שיפלו הם בעצמם מרוב ריב מחש'
מחשבותיך ודע כי כל מה שיתחזק אליך השפע השכלי
הנכבד יחלשו איבריך החיצונים והפנימיים ויתחיל כל
גופך להסער סערה חזקה מאד עד שתחשוב בעצמך
שעל כל פנים תמות בעת ההיא כי תפרד נפשך מגופך
מרוב שמחתה בהשגתה ובהכרתה מה שהכירה ותבחר
מות מחיים ברצונך כי זה המות קורה לגוף ובסיבתו
זה תחיה הנפש תחיית המתים לעולמי עד אז תדע ש'
שהגעת אל מעלת קבלת השפע ואם תרצה אז לכבד את
השם הנכבד ולעבדו באמת בחיי הגוף והנפש הסתר פנ'
פניך וירא מהביט אל האלהים ואל תקרב הלום

Instructions for meditation from Abraham Abulafia's Life of the World to Come *(2)*

וזהו שם בן עב

אותיות

ויונא כע ויסע ישר ומן ויבא
הפור ומע ויט ישר וסימנך
יהי מור ״ וסיר מור העולם
כלו׳ וזה צירופו הראשון׳

והו	ילי	סיט	עלמ	מהש	ללה	אבא	כהת
הזי	אלד	לאו	ההע	יזל	מבה	הרי	הקמ
לאו	כלי	לוו	פהל	נלכ	ייי	מלה	חהו
נתה	האא	ירת	שאה	ריי	אומ	לכב	ושר
יחו	להח	כוק	מנד	אני	חעמ	רהע	ייז
ההה	מיכ	וול	ילה	סאל	ערי	עשל	מיה
והו	דני	החש	עממ	ננא	נית	מבה	פוי
נממ	ייל	הרח	מצר	ומב	יהה	ענו	מחי
דמב	מנק	איע	חבו	ראה	יבמ	היי	מומ

לך זה השם הנכבד כתוב מפורש

The 72 letter Divine Name from Abraham Abulafia's Book of Desire

As one who wishes to pronounce the Name of Seventy-Two letters after the preparation necessary to it, you need to correct yourself to be in a special place, to pronounce the secret of the Ineffable Name, separated from every speaking being, and also from all the vanities common to them, and there should not remain in your heart any thought from the human and natural thoughts, neither voluntary nor necessary.

And as if you are the person who has written a divorce to all images of the lowly world, like that given by the person who makes a will before witnesses, commending someone to look after his wife and sons, giving his wealth to another apart from himself, closing himself off from all kinds of supervision and, transferring all responsibility from himself, has passed and gone away.

And after you do so put your face against the mentioned Name and imagine that a person stands before you and waits for you to talk with him and he is ready to answer you about everything that you will ask from him.

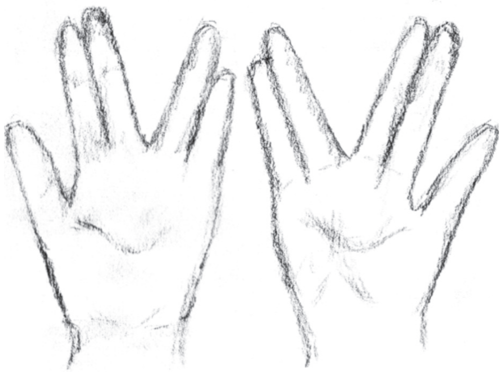
And you say something and he answers you. And this is the way to walk in. And begin in perfect intention to honor towards the Name, may He be blessed.

And say initially: "*Take my prayer as an incense offering before you, my upraised hands as an evening sacrifice*" (*Psalm* 141:2)

And raise your eyes skywards, and raise your left and right hands in the image of the raising of the hands of the priest which is the priestly blessing, who divides his fingers, five from the right and five from the left.

And the two little ones (the little and ring fingers) close and cleaving together and the middle and index fingers near them cleaving. And divide in the middle and the thumb spread by itself.

So both your hands in this form with your palms facing you:



And your tongue will divide between them in the image of the tongue of a scale.



And then begin to pronounce (1: natural voice; 2: angelic voice);

1 **VaHeyVa YoLaYo SaYoTey EaLaMey MeyHeyShi LaLAHey AaCaAa CaHeyTa**

2 **VaHeyVa YoLaYo SaYoTey EaLaMey MeyHeyShi LaLAHey AaCaAa CaHeyTa**

1 **HeyZaYo AaLaDa LaAaVa HeyHeyEa YoZaLa MeyBeyHey HeyReyYo HeyQoMey**

2 **HeyZaYo AaLaDa LaAaVa HeyHeyEa YoZaLa MeyBeyHey HeyReyYo HeyQoMey**

1 **LaAaVa CaLaYo LaVaVa PeyHeyLa NuLaCa YoYoYo MeyLaHey CheHeyVa**

2 **LaAaVa CaLaYo LaVaVa PeyHeyLa NuLaCa YoYoYo MeyLaHey CheyHeyVa**

1 **NuThaHey HeyAaAa YoReyTha ShiAaHey ReYoYo AaVaMey LaCaBey VaShiRey**

2 **NuThaHey HeyAaAa YoReyTha ShiAaHey ReYoYo AaVaMey LaCaBey VaShiRey**

1 **YoCheyVa LaHeyChey CaVaKo MeNuDa AaNuYo HeyEaMey ReyHeyEa YoYoZa**

2 **YoCheyVa LaHeyChey CaVaKo MeNuDa AaNuYo HeyEaMey ReyHeyEa YoYoZa**

1 **HeyHeyHey MeyYoCa VaVaLa YoLaHey SaAaLa EaReyYo EaShiLa MeyYoHey**

2 **HeyHeyHey MeyYoCa VaVaLa YoLaHey SaAaLa EaReyYo EaShiLa MeyYoHey**

1 VaHeyVa DaNuYo HeyCheyShi EaMeyMey NuNuAa NuYoTha MeyBeyHey PeyVaYo

2 VaHeyVa DaNuYo HeyCheyShi EaMeyMey NuNuAa NuYoTha MeyBeyHey PeyVaYo

1 NuMeyMey YoYoLa HeyReyChey MeyZaRey VaMeyBey YoHeyHey EaNuVa MeCheyYo

2 NuMeyMey YoYoLa HeyReyChey MeyZaRey VaMeyBey YoHeyHey EaNuVa MeyCheyYo

1 DaMeyBey MeyNuKo AaYoEa CheyBeyVa ReyAaHey YoBeyMey HeyYoYo MeyVaMey

2 DaMeyBey MeyNuKo AaYoEa CheyBeyVa ReAaHey YoBeyMey HeyYoYo MeyVaMey

And say first the letters of the "head of the head" (the initial letter in each triple) with a lengthened breath and much relaxation.

And then think that the one who stands in front of you, as mentioned, answers you.

And also do not lengthen the answering at all but say it calmly and collectedly, and then pronounce in answering one letter from the Name according to its presence and the first letter that you will answer is *Va* and after some time say another "end of the middle" (the middle letter in each triple) and answer with the letter *Hey* and then pronounce the "head of the end" (the last letter in each triple) and answer *Va*.

And after you complete the first Name which is *VaHeyVa* taken from the "head of the head" which is *Va* from "and he went" and from the "end of the middle" which is *Hey* from "tonight" and from the "head of the end" which is *Va* from "and he extended" (*Exodus* 14:21).

And immediately lower your hands in a relaxed manner, which you had held up before the Name in the image of the ten *Sefirot* (divine manifestations), five against five in the count of ten fingers, five from the right ones and five from the left ones, these to credit and those to obligation.

And for this put your left hand on your heart spread in five fingers and put on yourself your right hand spread in five fingers to denote the redeemer overcoming and conquering the defaulting lower, until he gave himself up and was conquered and confessed.

And for this you should straighten your heart immediately and prostrate yourself before the mentioned considered form in your heart that is before you and she is the initiator of the answering that you answered, who impressed your heart to her as a throne and her name is "Angel of God" and she is the mediator between you and your Creator and his honor is elevated.

And so after you pronounce the second Name and say the "head of the beginning" and answer *Yo* and say another "middle of the middle" and answer *La* and say another "head of the end" and answer *Yo* and then prostrate yourself.

And if you are clean and whole in everything that I have instructed you about, I have no doubt that the Glory will reveal itself to you in a form before you so that you can know its power, or will bring you speech that you will understand is from Him, may He be blessed, and is not from you.

And what can I teach you, me or a thousand like me, what He will teach you in one small moment, wonderful wisdoms that we have never heard for ages. But that God has guided our hand in this way and commands us to warn you to repent.

That is to say, if your heart runs, return to the place you went from as it is said "*the beings dashed and returned and on this is founded the covenant*" (*Sefer Yesira* 1:8, *Ezekiel* 1:14).

And after we have notified you of the received way of pronouncing the Name of Seventy-Two and warned you to follow His ways and to calculate its matters and combinations, you have to know that there is no end to the wisdom of that honorable Name, but that He has many wonderful ways and this is one of them.

Abraham Abulafia *Light of the Intellect* (1285)

At the hour you wish to recite this honorable Name inscribed with its vowels, adorn yourself and seek solitude in a special place where no one can hear your voice. Purify your heart and soul from all thoughts of this world. Think that in the coming hour your soul will leave your body and you will die to this world and you will live in the next world, that is the source of life scattered amongst all living beings. It is the Intellect which is the source of all wisdom, understanding and knowledge, and it is in the likeness of the King of Kings, whom everyone is in very great awe of. Indeed, the awe of one who comprehends this is double, consisting of the awe of excellence and the awe of love.

And when your consciousness comes to cleave to His Consciousness that produces knowledge in you, your consciousness must divest itself of the burden of all extraneous opinions, other than the knowledge shared between you and Him according to His honorable and awesome Name. Therefore, you need to know the form of His pronunciation.

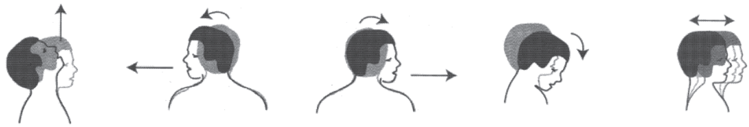
And this is its representation...

The form of the pronunciation of Aleph with Yud, forth & back:



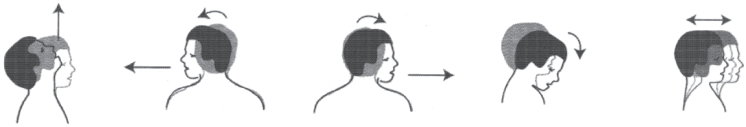
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AoYo	Two Breaths	AoYa	Two Breaths	AoYe	Two Breaths	AoYi	Two Breaths	AoYu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AaYo	Two Breaths	AaYa	Two Breaths	AaYe	Two Breaths	AaYi	Two Breaths	AaYu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AeYo	Two Breaths	AeYa	Two Breaths	AeYe	Two Breaths	AeYi	Two Breaths	AeYu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AiYo	Two Breaths	AiYa	Two Breaths	AiYe	Two Breaths	AiYi	Two Breaths	AiYu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AuYo	Two Breaths	AuYa	Two Breaths	AuYe	Two Breaths	AuYi	Two Breaths	AuYu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
YoAo	Two Breaths	YoAa	Two Breaths	YoAe	Two Breaths	YoAi	Two Breaths	YoAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
YaAo	Two Breaths	YaAa	Two Breaths	YaAe	Two Breaths	YaAi	Two Breaths	YaAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
YeAo	Two Breaths	YeAa	Two Breaths	YeAe	Two Breaths	YeAi	Two Breaths	YeAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
YiAo	Two Breaths	YiAa	Two Breaths	YiAe	Two Breaths	YiAi	Two Breaths	YiAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
YuAo	Two Breaths	YuAa	Two Breaths	YuAe	Two Breaths	YuAi	Two Breaths	YuAu
Twenty Five Silent Breaths between Tables								

The form of the pronunciation of Aleph with Heh, forth & back:



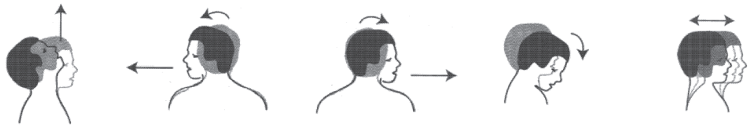
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AoHo	Two Breaths	AoHa	Two Breaths	AoHe	Two Breaths	AoHi	Two Breaths	AoHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AaHo	Two Breaths	AaHa	Two Breaths	AaHe	Two Breaths	AaHi	Two Breaths	AaHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AeHo	Two Breaths	AeHa	Two Breaths	AeHe	Two Breaths	AeHi	Two Breaths	AeHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AiHo	Two Breaths	AiHa	Two Breaths	AiHe	Two Breaths	AiHi	Two Breaths	AiHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AuHo	Two Breaths	AuHa	Two Breaths	AuHe	Two Breaths	AuHi	Two Breaths	AuHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HoAo	Two Breaths	HoAa	Two Breaths	HoAe	Two Breaths	HoAi	Two Breaths	HoAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HaAo	Two Breaths	HaAa	Two Breaths	HaAe	Two Breaths	HaAi	Two Breaths	HaAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HeAo	Two Breaths	HeAa	Two Breaths	HeAe	Two Breaths	HeAi	Two Breaths	HeAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HiAo	Two Breaths	HiAa	Two Breaths	HiAe	Two Breaths	HiAi	Two Breaths	HiAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HuAo	Two Breaths	HuAa	Two Breaths	HuAe	Two Breaths	HuAi	Two Breaths	HuAu
Twenty Five Silent Breaths between Tables								

The form of the pronunciation of Aleph with Vav, forth & back:



One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AoVo	Two Breaths	AoVa	Two Breaths	AoVe	Two Breaths	AoVi	Two Breaths	AoVu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AaVo	Two Breaths	AaVa	Two Breaths	AaVe	Two Breaths	AaVi	Two Breaths	AaVu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AeVo	Two Breaths	AeVa	Two Breaths	AeVe	Two Breaths	AeVi	Two Breaths	AeVu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AiVo	Two Breaths	AiVa	Two Breaths	AiVe	Two Breaths	AiVi	Two Breaths	AiVu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AuVo	Two Breaths	AuVa	Two Breaths	AuVe	Two Breaths	AuVi	Two Breaths	AuVu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
VoAo	Two Breaths	VoAa	Two Breaths	VoAe	Two Breaths	VoAi	Two Breaths	VoAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
VaAo	Two Breaths	VaAa	Two Breaths	VaAe	Two Breaths	VaAi	Two Breaths	VaAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
VeAo	Two Breaths	VeAa	Two Breaths	VeAe	Two Breaths	VeAi	Two Breaths	VeAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
ViAo	Two Breaths	ViAa	Two Breaths	ViAe	Two Breaths	ViAi	Two Breaths	ViAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
VuAo	Two Breaths	VuAa	Two Breaths	VuAe	Two Breaths	VuAi	Two Breaths	VuAu
Twenty Five Silent Breaths between Tables								

The form of the pronunciation of Aleph with Heh, forth & back:



One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AoHo	Two Breaths	AoHa	Two Breaths	AoHe	Two Breaths	AoHi	Two Breaths	AoHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AaHo	Two Breaths	AaHa	Two Breaths	AaHe	Two Breaths	AaHi	Two Breaths	AaHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AeHo	Two Breaths	AeHa	Two Breaths	AeHe	Two Breaths	AeHi	Two Breaths	AeHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AiHo	Two Breaths	AiHa	Two Breaths	AiHe	Two Breaths	AiHi	Two Breaths	AiHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
AuHo	Two Breaths	AuHa	Two Breaths	AuHe	Two Breaths	AuHi	Two Breaths	AuHu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HoAo	Two Breaths	HoAa	Two Breaths	HoAe	Two Breaths	HoAi	Two Breaths	HoAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HaAo	Two Breaths	HaAa	Two Breaths	HaAe	Two Breaths	HaAi	Two Breaths	HaAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HeAo	Two Breaths	HeAa	Two Breaths	HeAe	Two Breaths	HeAi	Two Breaths	HeAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HiAo	Two Breaths	HiAa	Two Breaths	HiAe	Two Breaths	HiAi	Two Breaths	HiAu
Five Silent Breaths								
One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath		One long Breath
HuAo	Two Breaths	HuAa	Two Breaths	HuAe	Two Breaths	HuAi	Two Breaths	HuAu
Twenty Five Silent Breaths between Tables								

When you begin to recite the letter *aleph* in all its vowelizations pronounced by you, since *aleph* points to the secret of unity, do not lengthen its recitation except according to the measure of one breath. You cannot stop anytime ever during that breath until you have completed its pronunciation. Lengthen that special breath according to your power to sustain one breath as much as you can lengthen it. And chant the *aleph*, and every letter you recite, with terror, awe and fear, coupled with the gladness of the soul in its comprehension which is great.

The form of chanting in every letter will be in the image of its vowelization, and in the vowel *cholam* (o) it will be upwards. When you begin reciting it face eastwards, not looking down or up. Sit wrapped in new or freshly cleaned white robes over all your clothing or covered with your prayer shawl (*Tallit*) and your head crowned with phylacteries (*Tefillin*) and your face towards the east from where the light reaches to the world.

And you have five directions in which to move your head.

With the vowel *cholam* you will begin from the middle, facing east, refine your thoughts, and raise your head slowly with the breath until you complete the recitation and your head is facing upwards. After you complete the recitation bow down to the earth once.

Do not differentiate between the breath of the *aleph* and the breath of the letter that cleaves to it, apart from one short or long breath. But between the letter of the Name and between the *aleph* in the straights or between the *aleph* and the letter of the Name in the inversions you can breathe two breaths only without pronunciation, no more.

After completing every row you are permitted to breathe five breaths only, no more, but you can choose to breathe less than five breaths. If you changed or mistook a row in this order, return to the head of that row until you say it correctly.

And in the image of the vowel *cholam* attracted upwards, chant the vowel *chirek* (i) drawn downwards and attract a supernal power to cleave it in you. Chant the vowel *shurek* (u) neither upwards nor downwards but as a central pull forward against the face in the center.

And with the vowel *tzere* (e) pull your head from the left to the right, and with the vowel *kametz* (a) from the right to the left.

And in all of them upon completion if you see a form in front of you prostrate yourself immediately before it (*Genesis* 17:3, *Joshua* 5:14). If you hear a faint or loud voice and wish to understand what it is saying answer immediately and say "*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening*" (I *Samuel* 3:9) and then do not speak at all and lean your ear to listen to what it will say to you.

And if you experience great fear that you cannot bear, prostrate yourself immediately, even while you are in the middle of reciting. If you do not see or do not hear anything leave it for all of that week.

And it is good to recite again once a week in the likeness of "*dashing to and fro*" (*Sefer Yesira* 1:8, *Ezekiel* 1:14) for upon this foundation is the covenant made.

And what else can I add that is not already known? If you are wise you will understand the whole order from my hints. And if you feel that your mind is weak in wisdom or Kabbalah or that your conceptions are full of the vanities of the time, do not recite the Name lest you miss the mark and add to your sins.

And know that between the table of the letter *yod* and the table of the letter *heh* you can breathe 25 breaths and no more, only if you have not stopped in the meanwhile either in speech or thought. And so between the letter *heh* and the letter *vaw* and the letter *vaw* and the letter *heh* only less than 25 breaths between table to table can you breathe.

בשעה שתרצה להזכיר את השם הנכבד הזה קדש את עצמך והתבודד במקום מיוחד שלא ישמע קולך לזולתך וטהר לבך ונפשך מכל מחשבות העולם הזה וחשוב שבאותה שעה תפרד נפשך מגופך ותפטר מן העוה"ז ותחיה לעולם הבא אשר הוא מקור החיים הנמלאים המפוזרים בכל חי והוא השכל שהוא מקור כל חכמה ובינה ודעת (אינו) כדמות מע"ה הקב"ה אשר הכל יראים ממנו יראה גדולה והיא יראת המשיג היא יראה כפולה יראת אהבה ויראת מעלה וכשבאה דעתך להדבק בדעתו הנותנת בך דעת צריכה דעתך להסיר מעליה כל הדעות הזרות זולת דעתו המשותפת בינך ובינו על פי שמו הנכבד והנורא ועל כן צריך אתה לדעת דמות מבטאו וזה ציורו

אי אי אי אי - אי		יא יא יא יא יא
אי אי אי אי אי		יא יא יא יא יא
אי אי אי אי אי	הנה כ"ה פנים ועוד	יא יא יא יא יא
אי אי אי אי אי	כ"ה - אחור והם' אלו	יא יא יא יא יא
אי אי אי אי אי		יא יא יא יא יא

ועל דרך זה בה' וכן בו' וכן בה' אחרונה ואנחנו קצרנוהו ועוד תקננו אותו על מתכונתו כי בעל הספר הניקוד בלבלם בדרך שירה להעלים וגלהו בסוף דבריו ואנחנו ישבנו אותו כראוי וכשורה ונחזור לדבריו זהו ציורו כשתתחיל להזכיר א באיזה ציור שתזכירהו מפני שהוא מורה על סוד היחוד אל תאריך בו כי אם לפי שיעור נשימה אחת ולא תפסיק בנשימה ההיא שום הפסק בעולם עד שתשלים כוונו ותאריך בנשימה ההי' המיוחדת כפי שיעור כח אריכות נשימתך כאשר בכל מה שתוכל להאריך בה ונגן בא' ובכל אות ואות שתשים בדעות הניקוד והוא החולם למעלה וכשתתחיל בהזכרתו תכוין פניך אל פני המזרח לא למעלה ולא למטה ואתה שב מעוטף בבגדים לבנים מכובסים טהורים על כל בגדיך או טליתך על ראשך מוכתר בתפילין לפני המזרח שמשם האור יוצא לעולם ולך"ה קוות להניע גם ראשך ובחולם תתחיל מלמטה המזרח וזכך רעיונך ותעלה ראשך עם הנשימה

Abulafia's meditation instructions from Light of the Intellect *as printed in Moses Cordovero's* Pardes Rimonim *(1)*

תגביה אותה מעט מעט עד שתשלים וראשך למעלה ואחר שתשלים
השתחוה עד הארץ פעם אחת ולא תבדיל נשימת האלף לנשימת׳
האות הדבק בו כי אם נשימה א׳ קצרה או ארוכה או בין אות
של שם בישרים או בהפוכים [illegible] לך יכולת להכניס ב׳ נשימות
בלי תנשא ולא יותר אבל שתות הרשות בידיך וכשתשלים כל
שור ושור יש לך רשות להכניס ה׳ נשימות לבד ולא יותר אבל
שתות הרשות בידך ואם שנית או שגית בשור מזה הסדר שוב
אל ראש השור האות עד שתאמרהו כראוי וכדמות האותי׳ הנמשך
למעלה כגון בחיר״ק שנמשך למטה ותושך כח העליון להדבקו
בך ובשורק לא תעלה ראשך לא למעלה ולא למטה אלא תשיבי׳
שעלפים כנגד הפנים. האמצעיים ובצירי תשפיך ראשך מהשמאל
אל הימין ובקמץ מהימין אל השמאל ובכלם אחר שתשלים אם
הראה צורה לפניך תשתחוה מיד כנגדה ואם תשמע קול קטן
או גדול ותרצה להבין מה שאומר ענהו מיד ואמר דבר אדוני
כי שומע עבדך ואתה לא תדבר כלל אלא הט אזניך לשמוע
מה שיאמר לך ואם תפחד פחד. גדול שלא תוכל לסובלו ואפי׳
באמצע ההזכרה תשתחוה מיד ואם לא תראה ולא תשמע עזוב
הדבר בכל אותו השבוע ושוב עוד להזכיר פעם אחת בשבוע
כדמות רצוא ושוב שעל דבר זה נכרת ברית ומה אוסיף עוד
להודיעך שכבר ידוע הוא שאם חכם אתה מן הרמוז תבין
הסדר כלו ואם תרגיש ששכלך חלוש בחכמה או בקבלה או
רעיונך חזק בשבלי זמן לא תזכיר את השם הן תוסיף אז
להשוא ודע שבין דף של יו״ד לדף של ה״א תוכל להכניס כ״ה
נשימות ולא יותר ובלבד שלא תפסיק בנתיים לא בדיבור ולא
במחשבה וכן בין ה״א לו׳ ובין ו׳ לה׳ רק שתות תכ״ה תוכל
להכניס עכ״ל דברי הרב בעל הספר הניקוד ודבריו דברי קבלה
אמת אל פה או דברי מגיד והארכנו בזה להיותם רבי התועל׳

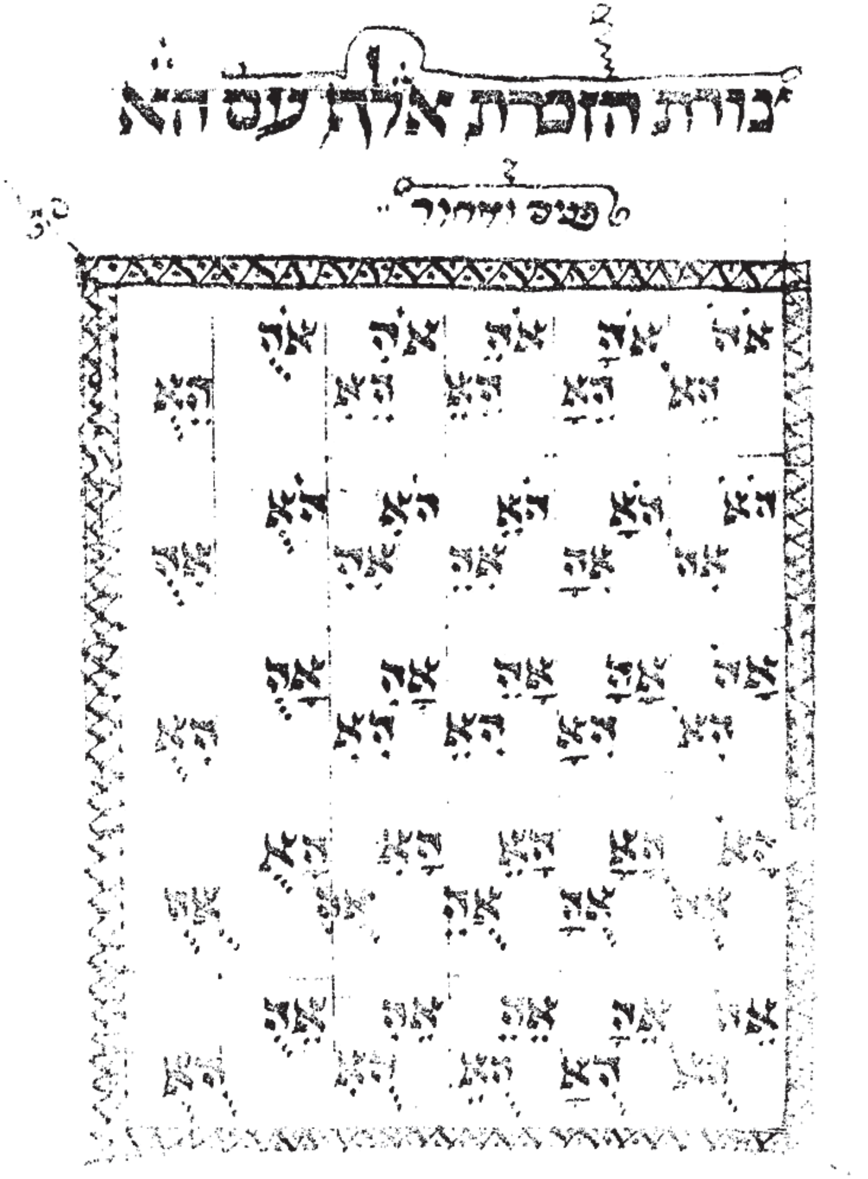
Abulafia's meditation instructions from Light of the Intellect *as printed in Moses Cordovero's* Pardes Rimonim *(2)*

ברוך אתה יי׳ אלהינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להזכיר
שמו הגדול באהבה: בשם

Praised be Thou, Lord, our God, King of the World, who has sanctified us through His commandments and has commanded us to pronounce His great Name in Love.

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Meditation table from Light of the Intellect*. The figure on the cover is contemplating this exact table, found in the same manuscript.*

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